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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0602

September 6, 2005

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<http://markudall.house.gov/HoR/Co02/home>

The Honorable Bill Owens
Governor, State of Colorado
136 State Capital Building
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Owens:

I commend you, the Colorado National Guard and the state's emergency response units for providing what appears to be a very swift and effective helping hand for victims of Hurricane Katrina. My office was able to make necessary connections for suppliers of emergency resources to officials in the disaster zone in large part because Colorado's emergency response infrastructure was prepared to help. I am particularly indebted to Tommy Grier and the Colorado Office of Emergency Management for their accessibility and guidance.

As soon as the state's efforts are completed and we get some distance to evaluate what happened or should have happened in responding to Katrina's devastation, I would like to respectfully request that you, the leadership of the Colorado General Assembly and the Colorado congressional delegation meet later this fall for a federal-state summit on Colorado's emergency preparedness. I believe a summit with state officials, the Colorado congressional delegation, representatives of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and federal emergency response agencies to explore our state's plans for large-scale disaster response would be an effective way to reassure Colorado's citizens that our preparedness is receiving necessary resources and support. A summit on Colorado's preparedness would also provide an important forum for mayors, police, fire and local government to express their concerns and identify potential needs for upgrading resources, materials and plans to meet catastrophic emergencies in Colorado.

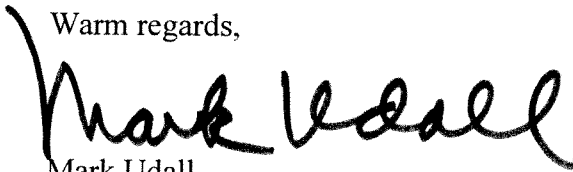
I believe we owe it to our citizens to move proactively as soon as we can to fully examine our state's capacity to withstand a large scale emergency. I recognize that this has been a subject of scrutiny by the Colorado General Assembly, and that your administration has participated in several disaster exercises with the federal government. There should be no interest in reinventing the wheel or creating an unnecessary review process, but at the same time, I think Coloradans may rightfully wonder whether we are turning every stone at the federal and state levels to plan and provide support for worst-case scenarios.

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We should anticipate that our state's equivalent of the "levees that did not hold in New Orleans", are not only being identified but properly addressed, and to the extent possible, discussed in a forum where there is public accountability.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues in the Colorado delegation and with your office to hold this summit. I look forward to your response and to working with you on this matter.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Udall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mark Udall
Member of Congress

cc: Colorado congressional delegation
Colorado General Assembly
Local governments